



U.S Forest Service – Cherokee National Forest



Fact Sheet

June 17, 2014



American ginseng (Panax quinquefolius)

Ginseng Harvesting in the Cherokee National Forest:

Ginseng is a native plant of Tennessee that grows mostly in cool, moist mountain forests. This perennial herb is highly prized for its large, fleshy roots which are believed to have medicinal value. Permits are required to collect ginseng in the national forest.

Range-wide, wild ginseng populations have declined over the past decade. The Forest Service is limiting the collection of ginseng in the Cherokee National Forest because of concerns about sustainable harvest levels. Forest Service managers believe it is in everyone's best interest to limit the amount of collection to help ensure that the plant's future sustainability is protected.

2014 Collection Season & Permits

For 2014, a maximum of 40 permits will be issued allowing 25 roots (approximately ¼ pound) per permit to be collected. The 2014 Cherokee National Forest ginseng permitting and collecting process will be as follows:

- The 2014 ginseng collecting season will be from **September 16 through September 30**. This two week period will be the only time that ginseng can be legally collected in the Cherokee National Forest by valid permit holders.
- The Forest Service will issue a **total of 40** permits, each with a **maximum limit** of 25 roots.
- A drawing will be held to determine the 40 permittees. Twenty permits will be issued for the northern half of the Forest (Watauga & Unaka Ranger Districts) and twenty permits will be issued for the southern half of the Forest (Tellico & Ocoee Ranger Districts).
- Permit drawing applicants may **only apply** for either the north or the south Cherokee NF.
- Permits will cost \$20 and are limited to one permit per person per year. Permittees must be at least 18 years of age.
- Five ginseng collection zones have been designated for the north Cherokee NF (Watauga & Unaka Districts), and five collection zones for the south Cherokee NF (Tellico & Ocoee Districts). One zone on each half of the Forest will be open for collecting each year. Collection zones will be rotated each year to allow plants a five year recovery period necessary to help ensure populations remain sustainable.

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- For 2014 the following ginseng collection zones will be open:
 - **North Cherokee NF** – *Zone: 4* (Cherokee National Forest land within Carter County)
 - **South Cherokee NF** – *Zone: 1* (Cherokee NF land from the Georgia border north to the Ocoee River (includes Parksville Lake))

All persons interested in obtaining a permit to collect ginseng in either the north or the south Cherokee National Forest for the 2014 season must submit a letter of request to:

U.S. Forest Service
2800 Ocoee Street North
Cleveland, TN 37312
ATTN: Ginseng Permits

Letters of request can be sent to the office listed above between August 4 and August 29, 2014, and must be **received** no later than August 29 to be included in the drawing. Letters **must** include:

- Applicant's full name (person who will do collecting)
- Mailing address
- Phone number of the individual who will do the collecting
- Which section of the Forest permit is being requested for – north Cherokee NF **or** south Cherokee NF (only one section can be applied for)

Successful permittees will be notified by letter beginning the week of September 1. In order to obtain the permit, individuals must bring the letter of notification and valid ID to the Ranger District Office identified in the notification letter to pay for and sign the permit prior to collecting. Once notified, successful applicants may obtain their permits beginning immediately, or anytime during the open season (September 16-30).

For more Information

For questions or additional information please call: Watauga Ranger District– 423-735-1500, or Ocoee Ranger District – 423-338-3300.

Cherokee National Forest 2014 Ginseng Collection Zones:

- *A map will be issued with each permit indicating areas within the zone that are open for collecting. No collecting will be permitted outside the areas designated on the map.*
- *Zones highlighted in **yellow** below indicate those that are open for collection in 2014.*

Southern Districts (Tellico & Ocoee Ranger Districts)

Zone 1 – Cherokee National Forest land from the Georgia border north to the Ocoee River (includes Parksville Lake)

Zone 2- Cherokee National Forest land from Ocoee River north to Hiwassee River

Zone 3 – Cherokee National Forest land from Hiwassee River to Highway 68

Zone 4 – Cherokee NF land between Hwy 68 south of Tellico Plains and Hwy 165.

Zone 5- Cherokee National Forest land from Hwy 165 north to Forest boundary

Northern Districts (Watauga & Unaka Ranger Districts)

Zone 1 – Cherokee National Forest land within Cocke County

Zone 2- Cherokee National Forest land within Greene County

Zone 3 - Cherokee National Forest land within Unicoi & Washington Counties

Zone 4 – Cherokee National Forest land within Carter County

Zone 5- Cherokee National Forest land within Sullivan & Johnson County

